

Guardian

Volume 12, Issue 18 Produced for Personnel of KFOR Multinational Brigade (East) January 2006



*Looking
back*

Going home soon?



Take the time to get there safely!

Drive to arrive.

This message brought to you by Task Force Falcon Command Information

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PHOTO BY SPC. ALICIA DILL



PHOTO BY SPC. LYNETTE HOKE

On the Cover:

Taking aim at a 500 meter target Sgt. Maj. Angel Roacha, operations sergeant major, Task Force Sidewinder, hones his sniper skills at Range 7 on July 7.

COVER PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. R. DAVID KYLE

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Looking back, looking ahead

By Brig. Gen. John S. Harrel

For nearly twelve months now, the Soldiers of KFOR 6B have been working tirelessly with our multinational partners to maintain a safe and secure environment in our brigade's area of responsibility. Since arriving here in February, we have seen literally thousands of KFOR soldiers come and go. In a few short weeks it will be our turn to return home to our families, friends, and neighbors.

You can do so knowing you performed your mission admirably. You did your duty. You accomplished your mission – you've made a difference in the lives of thousands. On behalf of the commanders and staff of Multinational Brigade (East) – thank you for a job well done!

As we out-process, load our equipment and train up our replacements, I'd like you to reflect on a few things before departing this mission.

First, I want you to think about what you've done to maintain peace in the Balkans. This is no small feat. Our presence here and the work you've done patrolling the villages, securing the roads and helping local leaders build the infrastructure and civil society organizations needed for a better future, is a crucial component in the Global War on Terrorism.

Sept. 11 taught us many lessons. Perhaps the most important is the danger failed states pose to the safety and security of our democratic way of life. By acting together in this vital region of South Eastern Europe, the United States and its international partners are preventing extremism from taking root in this troubled part of the world.

Be proud of your accomplishments and the contributions you've made to stabilize this part of the world. You're defending our Republic while helping create a security environment that allows the people of Kosovo to develop their own democratic institutions.

Secondly, I'd ask you to think about your individual and unit accomplishments. Many have focused on

furthering their civilian and military education. Soldiers have enrolled in and completed 6,600 hours of college credit, earning degrees and preparing for future civilian careers.

We've graduated hundreds of Soldiers from the Warrior Leaders' course, BNCOC and 91W courses to name a few, fulfilling individual training requirements that would normally take years to achieve. I challenge all those graduates to take back what they've learned in the classroom and in the field and put it to work rebuilding and reconstituting our units as we prepare for future missions.

Many Soldiers devoted significant time and energy to meeting and exceeding various physical fitness goals. I've seen the results and you should be proud. Continue making fitness a priority – it is important to the well-being of our Army.

When you return home, I ask you to continue building on the progress you've made during this deployment. Continue improving yourself as a soldier, physically and mentally. Continue improving your unit, both on an individual Soldier and collective level. And above all, continue serving your state and nation. Obviously, my hope is that you continue serving in the military. The experience and training you've gained during the past eighteen months make you an even more valuable asset in our nation's efforts to advance democratic principles around the world.

Lastly, I want you to think about safety and complacency. We must safely complete the mission and bring everyone home. We've been extremely fortunate. While we've had some close calls and a few significant injuries, overall our safety record is good. But that can change in an instant. Soldiers and leaders at every level must continue working together to mitigate safety risks right up until the very end of our mission. Complacency kills. Don't let that happen to you or the Soldiers you're responsible for.

Guardian

Produced for Personnel of KFOR Multinational Brigade (East)

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I will remember...

KFOR 6B Soldiers reflect back on their deployment in Kosovo



"I didn't see nearly as many patients as I thought I would and I will surely remember the difference we made with the Soldiers and the people in the communities,"

Capt. LeAnne Brown, officer in charge of the intensive care unit, Task Force Med.



"In 12 months time period, we've trained more crew members on more complex missions than we could have done in three years time."

Chief Warrant Officer John Cover, production control officer, Task Force Shadow.



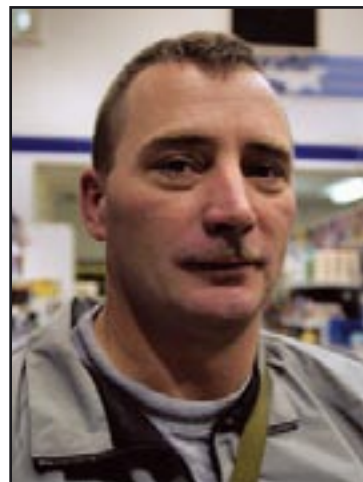
"Working together and being away from home, the people here are the family I got. I will remember the camaraderie and the love I experienced with my fellow Soldiers."

Spc. Clemente Ramos, military policeman, Task Force Dragoon.



"It was a good feeling to help Soldiers that depended on us for their pay issues. Back at home our job responsibilities aren't this rewarding."

Spc. Catherine Gil, finance specialist, Task Force Falcon.



"The first big snowfall of the season erupted in a powder fight with a larger number of people at the softball field (at CMT). I think it was the first time the units really got to work together since we got here."

Sgt. 1st Class Theodore C. Meyer, platoon sergeant, Task Force Sidewinder.



"I will remember working with the Germans on all three of the Task Force Tornado held Schutzenschnurs as an interpreter. We developed a good rapport and great working relations that lasted all year,"

Sgt. Daniel Welch, S-5 driver, Task Force Tornado.



Story and photos by 1st. Lt. Tim Mills

On the edge of downtown Gnjilane/Gjilan is the “sweet spot” known as Camp Monteith. Much smaller than Camp Bondsteel, this American base feels more like a small village compared to the big city experience of Camp Bondsteel.

After 11 months, the approximate 400 troops of Task Force Sidewinder have made this their “home away from home.”

In February, their boots hit the ground in a new neighborhood – Kosovo. When moving into a new area, safety is paramount, especially when it’s your job to maintain it. Soldiers of Company D, 1-148th Infantry, Companies A and C, 1-160th Infantry, and engineers from Company A, 578th Engineers, discharged their duties professionally.

Just weeks from now, the troops will be asked the question, “What have you done during your year in Kosovo?” Some will find this question daunting. Others will launch into colorful details about the experience, the people, the kind treatment toward Americans and what our presence means to the stability of the region. Soldiers’ answers will unveil their opinions about the mission and assist those who know little about the province, in developing theirs.

Sidewinder personnel have spent countless hours on missions and patrols. Most of them already know how they feel about the year they’ve spent in Kosovo and some are already telling their story.

“Task Force Sidewinder’s greatest contribution to Kosovo, in my opinion, has been providing a sense of security to the people of Kosovo,” said Spc. Allen A. White, Company C 1-160th Infantry. “Our daily contact with the people in our sector has borne this out with many people expressing gratitude for our presence and respect for the unbiased nature of our mission.”

Daily contact with the populace has brought out a “personal” display of Sidewinder’s commitment. Spc. Rex Gadia, Company A, 578th Engineers, thinks the longevity of the mission has had a positive impact on military/civilian relations.

“Our rotation spent more time than previous rotations interacting with the local populace and the same key figures,” said Gadia.

The task force left more than a social influence. Operationally they have demonstrated their pledge to safety through a variety of missions and multinational projects.

For more than 300 days and nights, the California Guardsmen conducted missions across the 1,150 square kilometer sector of the largest task force area of responsibility (AOR) in Multinational Brigade (East).

With an aggressive operations tempo (OPTEMPO), their monthly average has exceeded 110,000 miles behind the wheel, bringing the deployment total to more than 1,000,000 miles. These miles account for the more than 6,600 reconnaissance patrols, 300 security patrols and 6,100 command and control/administrative and logistics missions.

Task Force Sidewinder has been successful because of Soldiers like White, embracing the mission and doing their part to provide an environment where children and adults can thrive in a tolerant and peaceful society.

“The thing I think I will remember most about Kosovo are the children,” said White. “Some of them have been through a living hell, but still have the sparkle of hope in their eyes. At times it has been very hard when I have seen children the same age as my own in desperate poverty, and I realize how very lucky my family and I have been.”

In the absence of family and friends, Sidewinder Soldiers have expanded their world, making room for the people of Kosovo as neighbors; an experience that has been an eye-opener for many.

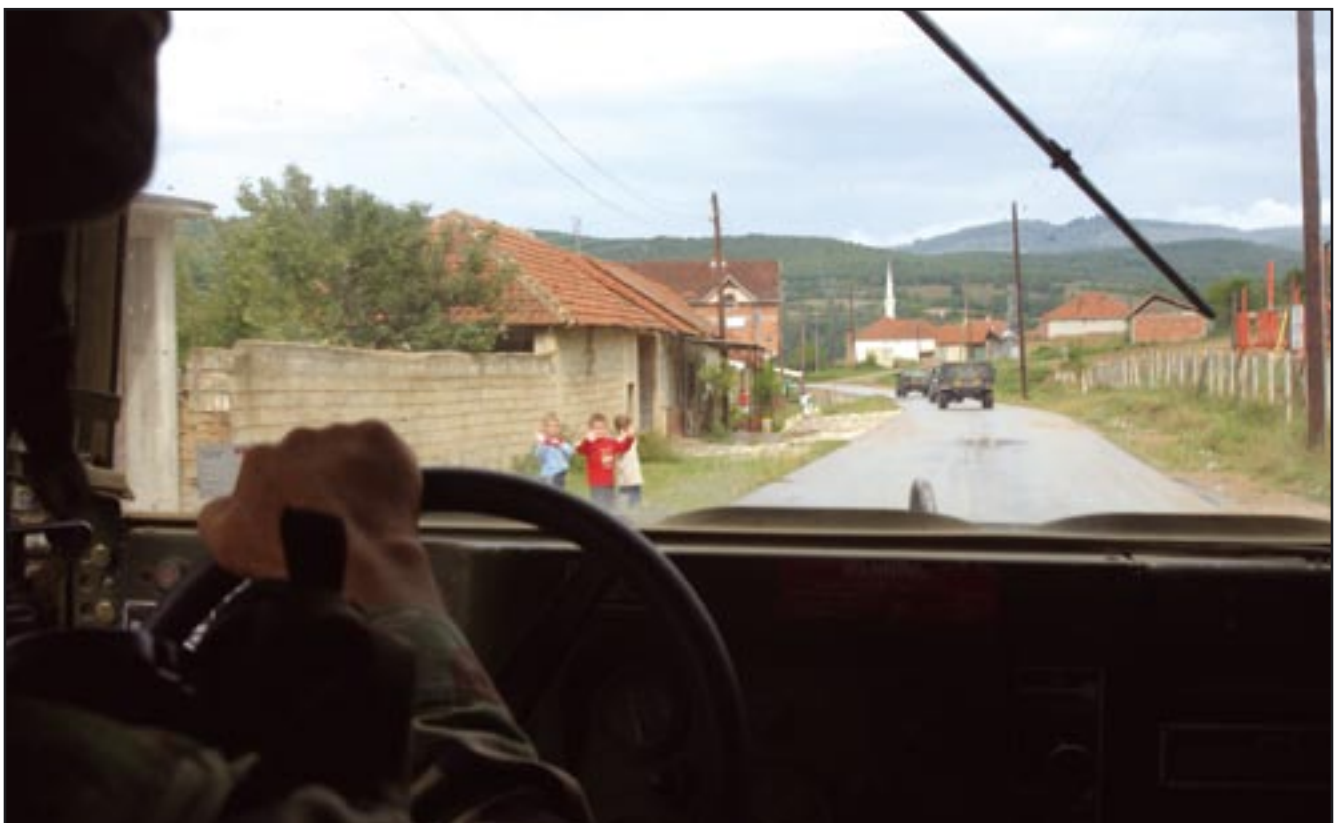
“It gives the younger Soldiers an opportunity to get a broader cultural perspective,” said Spc. A. Caylao, Company A, 1-160th Infantry.

When asked about their year in Kosovo, the Monteith troops will respond differently, yet the prevailing conclusion should be a cohesive respect for mission accomplishment.

As the last boot is lifted from Kosovo soil, the “imprint of the peacemaker” will remain.



Top left page 6, Soldiers from Company C pull security during a Cordon & Search mission. Top left page 7, Sgt. Robert W. Gandapermana, works with a local doctor Hajriz Ibrahim at a MEDCAP held in Dobrcane/Dobercan. Top right page 7, Sgt. George Cruz waves as he approaches the firing line of a live fire exercise held at Range 4. Bottom page 7, Children wave as Soldiers from Company A, 1-160th Infantry, pass by on a mounted reconnaissance patrol.







Top page 8, Chaplain (Maj.) Oran Roberts talks to Soldiers participating in the pilgrimage of the Black Madonna. Top Page 9, 1st Sgt. Timothy Barton (center) works with Soldiers during a boxing class. Bottom right page 9, While conducting a dismounted reconnaissance patrol, Sgt. Gean Frenette, (center) talks to a Serb gentleman. Bottom middle, Spc. Robert Calhoun takes a young girl's blood pressure at a MEDCAP held in Bostane. Bottom left page 8, Soldiers from Company A, 578th Engineers participate in a multinational bridge building project in Rosuje.





PHOTO BY CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2 ERIC MANCHON

Task Force Shadow

Story by *Spc. Alicia Dill*

One of the most important things that makes Task Force Shadow an important asset to Multinational Brigade (East) might be their helicopters. However, besides their flight capability, Shadow Soldiers from Pennsylvania, Kansas and New Mexico, have taken their 6B rotation to the next level with high-speed, Noncommissioned Officer training and thousands of flight hours accrued.

The task force's necessity was evident throughout, but from the very beginning, their unit cohesion and flight skills were tested.

"One of the most interesting missions was when we supported the recovery of an EC-130 in Albania," said Lt. Col. Daniel Stefanowich, commander, Task Force Shadow. "Special Operations had a crash in March and the only way to get to the site was by helicopter, so we sent two and we rotated crews. It was quite challenging, but we supported them 100 percent."

With a strong start working together successfully, Shadow continued with several other ways to get the most out of the deployment.

"We have done a lot of sling load training with these

other units as well as insertion/extractions with the other countries here," said Sgt. 1st Class David Pessall, Company B, Task Force Shadow. "We get to see the bird's eye view, which is why I like flying so much, because you get to see the country as a whole."

Achieving the Army physical fitness standards brought the Task Force Shadow team together as a whole, as well.

"This is first time ever in my battalion, where everyone in the entire company passed their APFT and that doesn't happen often back home," said Sgt. 1st Class Brian Peacock, first sergeant, Company A, Task Force Shadow. "That, to me, is a major accomplishment."

Wrapping up the deployment is one way the leadership of Task Force Shadow can reflect on how much they accomplished while deployed to Kosovo.

"We're going home with knowledge that would have taken us five or six years back home versus the 12 months, boots on the ground deployed, that we've had here," said Command Sgt. Major Thomas Pounds, Task Force Shadow. "It has advanced the training of our unit and our knowledge that we gained by working on the aircraft every day."



PHOTO BY SPC. ALICIA DILL

Top left photo, A sunset in Kosovo is the perfect backdrop for this helicopter. Above photo, Brig. Gen. William Wade II, congratulates Staff Sgt. Collin Bowser, after he completed the 91W course. Right photo, Staff Sgt. Jason Guinn, act as a range safety when Task Force Shadow fired with Irish troops. A group of Shadow Soldiers take a break in front of their helicopter during the mission to Albania.

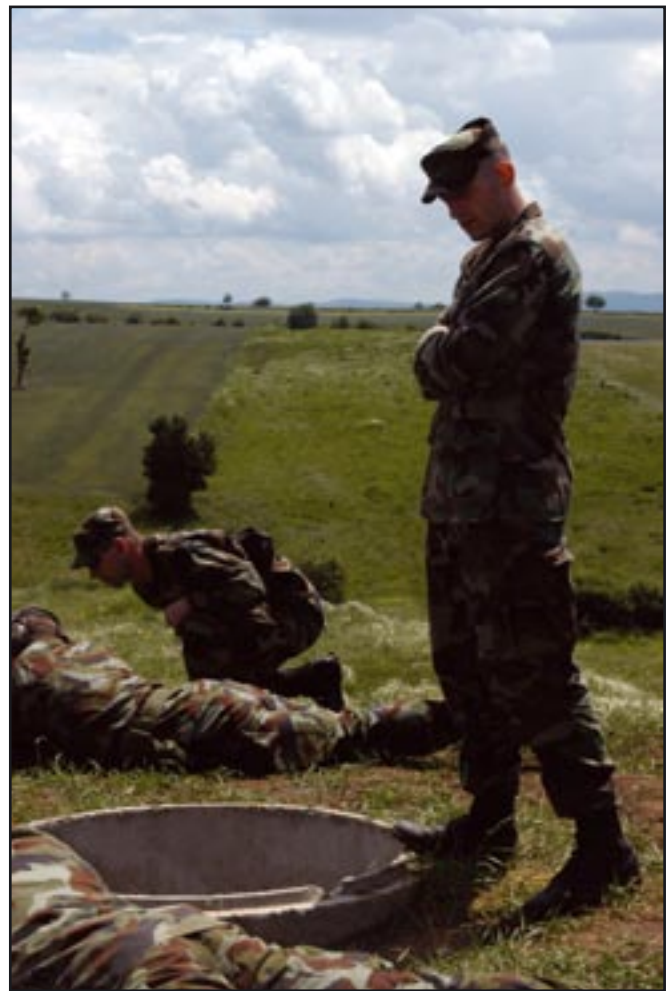


PHOTO BY SPC. ALICIA DILL



PHOTO BY CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2 ERIC MANCHON



PHOTO BY SPC. ALICIA DILL



PHOTO BY SPC. ALICIA DILL



PHOTO BY SPC. ALICIA DILL



Top left photo, Spc. Frederick Packard, spends part of his day with the children at the SOS Kinderdorf International in Pristina/Prishtina. Top right photo, Capt. Jim Kreeger, takes a break and airs out his feet. Center photo, Company C, Task Force Shadow, trains at Camp Bondsteel for a future mass casualty exercise. Above photo, 1st. Lt. Eric Jackson, takes a break for a conversation with some Spanish Soldiers during an interoperability exercise held near Camp Espana.



PHOTO BY SPC. ALICIA DILL



PHOTO BY SPC. ALICIA DILL



PHOTO BY SPC. ALICIA DILL

Top right photo, Sgt. Lionel Hamilton, gives a quick tour to local kids on the soccer field in Kamenica/Kamenice. Above photo, Maj. Joel Allmadinger, briefs Task Force Sidewinder on upcoming procedures during sling load operations at Camp Monteith.



PHOTO BY SPC. LYNETTE HOKE

Task Force Falcon and other Soldiers of rotation 6B, led by Brig. Gen. John S. Harrel, prepare to return home, while the incoming rotation, KFOR 7, prepares to carry the torch forward. Task Force Falcon spent the past year conducting peacekeeping operations in Kosovo.

The 11 months since Task Force Falcon arrived in Kosovo have been spent working hard and it made history by being the first rotation to deploy a full year in Kosovo in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

It is comprised mostly of Soldiers from California, Kansas and Pennsylvania. Many Army Corps branches and smaller composite units and Soldiers on individual orders make up its ranks. Units and specialties like civil affairs, finance, judge advocate, postal, chaplain, psychological operations, public affairs, engineers, explosive ordnance, headquarters and headquarters support and others have all influenced the progress in Kosovo.

"We are an unusual army; we are an army that makes people free," said Brig. Gen. John S. Harrel, commander of Multi-national Brigade (East). "When our army shows up, our Soldiers are the ones who spread democracy. We make a difference in the world and our Soldiers can honestly say, 'We made a difference so the people in Kosovo can live in freedom,'" said Harrel.

During their deployment in Kosovo,

the peacemakers carried out patrols, cordon and search operations and joint patrols with other international Kosovo Forces, United Nations Mission in Kosovo Police (UNMIK-P), Kosovo Police Service (KPS) and other units.

Numerous weapons and explosives were found and many criminal suspects were handed over to the KPS due in part to the efforts of MNB(E) operations.

Only recently the brigade was responsible for the apprehension of a wanted criminal and terrorist, Ramadan Shiti. Shiti, wanted under both international and Kosovo arrest warrants, was taken into custody after a six hour pursuit through a rough and remote area of Kosovo.

The task force also participated in medical and veterinary civil assistance programs, interoperability missions, radio shows, athletic competitions, engineering projects and numerous visits to local schools and orphanages.

It was a time of change, where freedom of movement flourished in Kosovo, which helped move the peace process forward.

As Kosovo changed, so did the command structure of MNB (East).

In the middle of the deployment, then Brig. Gen. William H. Wade II, commander of MNB (East), was promoted to major general and was selected to become the adjutant general for the California National Guard.

As Wade accepted his new duties in California, then Col. John S. Harrel was promoted to brigadier general and assumed duties as MNB (E) commander.

Besides looking forward to going home, Task Force Falcon troops took the opportunity to look back and reflect. During the 4th of July, Veterans Day and Memorial Day ceremonies, the troops honored those who served and gave the ultimate sacrifice to keep others free.

Looking back on the mission here, 1st Lt. Bryan Wilke, G1, Task Force Falcon said, "I think working together and becoming one cohesive unit was a big accomplishment. The task force came from many different backgrounds and for us to work together as one is outstanding."

"I think my greatest accomplishment here was being able to help and interact with the local school kids and show them a positive side of the United States and the Army," said Sgt. Bernice Robinson, Task Force Falcon.

Soldiers from KFOR 6B will return home with new skills, new experiences, and new friends, but it is what they leave behind that the people of Kosovo will remember.

"When a Soldier deploys somewhere, that place is changed forever," said Harrel. "We leave behind three ideas that are mentioned in the Declaration of Independence; life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."



PHOTO BY SPC. ALICIA DILL



PHOTO BY SPC. ALICIA DILL

Left photo, Sgt. Bernice Robinson, Task Force Falcon visits with local children in the province. Center photo, Sgt. 1st. Rob Stanton, observes the parade at the Hellenic Independence Day. Above photo, Sgt. Alejandro Arias, is promoted to staff sergeant by Brig. Gen. John S. Harrel, commander, Multinational Brigade (East), while 1st Sgt. Bradley Warner and Command Sgt. Maj. William Clark help out. Bottom photo, Sgt. Sandra Yarnell, legal clerk, gets ready for her debut as a casualty. Below photo, Sgt. 1st Class John Makamson, Task Force Falcon, MPAD, takes a photograph during 4th of July activities.



PHOTO BY SPC. ALICIA DILL



PHOTO BY SPC. ALICIA DILL



PHOTO COURTESY OF EOD



PHOTO BY SPC. LYNETTE HOKE



PHOTO BY SPC. LYNETTE HOKE



PHOTO BY SPC. ALICIA DILL

Left photo, Sgt. David Devigne, Explosive Ordnance Disposal, also known as Tigger, brings a friendly cartoon character to life for a few children. Far left photo, Lt. Col. Lisa Costanza, uses her muscles during 4th of July activities. Left center photo, Spc. Amy Niles, attends an Military Police Detachment dinner. Above photo, Sgt. Dennis Scott and Spc. Randy Moulder participate in the ceremony for Flag Day. Far Right Photo, Staff Sgt. Nicole McBurnett (center) and Maj. Lisa Peake get ready for their ride of glory during 4th of July activities. Bottom photo, Sgt. Matt Jackson, (right) follows close behind the distinguished visitor, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Reserves Michelle S. Jones, he was escorting for the Joint Visitors Bureau.



PHOTO BY SPC. ALICIA DILL



PHOTO BY SPC. ALICIA DILL

Task Force Dragoon

Story by Spc. Lynette Hoke, photos courtesy of Task Force Dragoon

A small child, playing not far from her home, spots a group of people in the far distance and suddenly becomes ignited with a boost of energy. At a full sprint, she rushes in the direction of the group.

The child doesn't see family members, but rather a patrol of United States Kosovo Forces (US KFOR) Soldiers, all bearing the military police brassard she has become familiar with during the last year.

"I'm proud of all the things we have done here in Kosovo and you can see it in the children's eyes as we patrolled from town to town, that we did our jobs here," said Sgt. Michael Savin, military police officer, Task Force Dragoon. "I know we're all Guardsmen and not regular army military police, but I felt we did the same job, and even in some instances, better than our counterparts. We had great Noncommissioned Officers at Camp Monteith who kept us informed and motivated on our mission."

The Soldiers of Task Force Dragoon are comprised of troops from the 40th Military Police Company, a unit within the 49th Military Police Battalion, and several other units from throughout California.

"We became a tight organization within the last year. It was really awesome to see four different Military Police companies from the state of California contribute to a safe environment in Kosovo," said Sgt. Rudy Reyes, military police officer, Task Force Dragoon. "We all learned something new every day. We conducted every mission we were sent out to do and we should all be proud of that."

Some are veterans from previous missions, some are civilian police officers, and for some, Kosovo is their first deployment. However, all Soldiers share a common drive to complete the mission in the province.

"Task Force Dragoon should feel proud of accomplishing its mission of providing a safe and secure environment in Kosovo," said Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Padgett. "The Military Police combat support elements will use the skills learned here and apply them to future deployments wherever the Guard sends us."

The 40th Infantry Division has used their mission in Kosovo not only to improve the lives of the people of the province, but also the professional and personal growth of members of the Los Alamitos, headquartered unit.

"I am proud of the number of successful missions we have

completed," said Command Sgt. Major Lenny McAdams, Task Force Dragoon.

"Also, the Soldier exchange program with the multinational military police force, the Bulgaria detachment's remarkable abilities to keep the peace, Brigade NCO of the Quarter, United States Army Europe Military Police Officer of the Quarter,

Warrior Leadership Course and Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course honor and distinguished graduates, and promotions of almost 80 percent of the Task Force, just to name a few of our accomplishments which has far exceeded our predecessors."

The Dragoons will leave high standards for the next group of military police officers.

"The mission in Kosovo has been good for TF Dragoon," said Lt. Col. Julio Lima, the commander of Task Force Dragoon. "We have been able to provide

successful Military Police support and have helped to keep Soldiers safe in Kosovo, Bulgaria and Greece. We have worked to improve coordination and cooperation with KPS and UNMIK-P. We have successfully investigated felony and misdemeanor crimes. We have greatly improved the cooperation and coordination between the MPs of the various maneuver brigades in KFOR."

The Kosovo deployment has been a positive experience for some seasoned noncommissioned officers.

"This has been the proudest year in my 37 year military career, serving as the sergeant major for Task Force Dragoon," said McAdams.

"In all my 16 years in the military, I have never seen so many promotions and school offerings," said Padgett. "It still is amazing to me how this rotation insisted upon Soldier development and growth here in Kosovo."

Soon, all of the Soldiers of Task Force Dragoon will be back at their home stations. They will no longer have to stand guard, do rounds or patrol the streets of Kosovo. However, the memories and experiences from their time in Kosovo will last forever.

"We helped the people of the province, we helped our Soldiers and we helped each other," said Padgett. "We should all be proud of these accomplishments for a job well done."

"I would not have had a better group of Soldiers even if I could have hand-picked them for this deployment. I cannot put into words how proud I am of the Soldiers and their families for the sacrifice and the dedication to duty and sense of purpose they possess," said McAdams. "We've had a few hiccups, but we've stood tall and Soldiered hard!"





Far left photo, Military Police from Task Force Dragoon practice crowd riot control training on Camp Bondsteel. Left photo, Military police officers fire 9mm during a basic combat pistol course on Range 7. Above photo, Sgt. Mario Rodriguez and Sgt. Frank Briseno, both military police officers, take a break while climbing up Mount Duke. Bottom photo, Sgt. Clayton Glover and his military working dog, Rio, practice patrol training to maintain the dog's aggressive tendencies.







Top left, Sgt. Jessica Keller, military police officer, fires on a range. Bottom center photo, Sgt. Shawn Johnson talks to a local during a patrol. Above photo, Sgt. Nancy Weber, (right) military police officer, is followed by school children during a visit to a school. Bottom right photo, Sgt. Anthony Mungarro, military police officer, fires his M-16 on range day.





PHOTO BY 1ST. LT. TIM MILLS

Above photo, Sgt. Grant Cooper, questions a local man with a KPC officer assisting during a MEDCAP. Top right photo, A Swedish Soldier and a combat medic work on a casualty during a mass casualty exercise. Center photo, Capt. Rudy Hernandez (left) and Col. Gayle Owens (right) receive awards from the 4th of July events. Bottom right photo, Sgt. Stefanie Davison, learns how to apply moulage during training held at the hospital.

TASK FORCE MED

Story by Spc. Alicia Dill

Alabama, California, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, New Mexico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Washington, and West Virginia.

What do these names have in common? Besides all being states, they are also Soldiers from Task Force Med Falcon call home.

With the diversity of a number of states and made up of both Guard and Reserve components, Med Falcon troops can be used as an example of the "Citizen Soldier" concept. The mission of this task force was not only to maintain peace in the province, but to also care for the troops.

"Task Force Med Falcon provides level three combat health support to Multinational Brigade (East); provides emergency care to any person to preserve life, limb or eyesight; and promotes multi-ethnic healthcare through teaching, coaching and mentoring," said Command Sgt. Major Richard Park, Task Force Med Falcon.

"In addition, Task Force Med Falcon helped to conduct many Medical Civilian Assistance Programs, Veterinary Civilian Assistance Program and Optician Civilian Assistance Programs, to improve the healthcare of Kosovo's people," he said.

Mission-focused troops still had the opportunity to improve themselves on a personal level.

"I am more knowledgeable about my job and I have

grown as a person," said Staff Sgt. Alonzo Harper, Task Force Med Falcon. "I deal with a lot of people's careers and financial stability, so I have to make sure I know the regulations and policies at all times."

"Personally, I sponsored many runs to improve our Soldiers' physical fitness level," said Park.

"As a health care-provider command sergeant major, it's important for me to provide our Soldiers the opportunity to run. For example, I sponsored the Command Sergeant Major Four-Mile run to see if they are able to run four miles in 36 minutes. Yes, we have to run Radar Hill, which is the 18th Airborne Corps Standard and I gave them a certificate and coin," he said.

In finishing this deployment, Med Falcon troops still have one more thing to give, advice.

"See as much of Kosovo as you can and every time you get a chance to go outside the wire take advantage of it," said Sgt. Kami Erickson, Task Force Med Falcon. "Being in a hospital, we don't necessarily have the mobility of other units and are often confined to Camp Bondsteel, but there are plenty of opportunities to go out and take advantage of what this deployment has to offer."

"Be patient, and keep yourself busy, that will definitely make your time go by expeditiously, and get all the schooling you can get while you are here," said Harper.



PHOTO BY SPC. ALICIA DILL



PHOTO BY SPC. ALICIA DILL



PHOTO BY SPC. ALICIA DILL



PHOTO BY SPC. ALICIA DILL



PHOTO COURTESY OF COMMAND SGT. MAJ. RICHARD PARK



PHOTO BY SPC. ALICIA DILL

Top left photo, Spc. Omari Carmichael, applies moulage to Spc. Claudia Cespedes, during a mass casualty exercise. Bottom left photo, Command Sgt. Major Richard Park poses with local children for a photograph. Above photo, Sgt. Candace Jackson (left) and Staff Sgt. Tina Romero (right) visit a local school in Ferizaj/Urosevac. Top right photo, Sgt. Patricia Holliday holds back the flock during a VETCAP. Bottom right photo, Sgt. Myesha Britt, helps to triage the patients as a Swedish Soldier braces the casualty's neck during a mass casualty exercise.



PHOTO BY 1ST LT. TIM MILLS



PHOTO BY SPC. ALICIA DILL

Task Force Tornado



Story and photos by Spc. Lynette Hoke

Snapping shut his load-bearing equipment belt, securing all items into their proper place and gearing up for the day's patrol is a process that mirrors the one from the day before. However, this day is slightly different, as the Soldier checks and rechecks one particular item placed in a pocket, a small camera. It's for today's patrol – one of their last.

The Soldiers of Task Force Tornado will soon have nothing more than photos and memories from their past year in Kosovo. The 1-635th Armor Battalion troops from Kansas were part of the first rotation to serve one year in Kosovo.

"We've had an opportunity during our year in Kosovo that no other rotation has had," said 1st Sgt. Patrick Cullen, S5 Noncommissioned Officer in charge, Task Force Tornado. "We've experienced all four seasons, developed deeper personal relationships with Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians, along with the others working here from dozens of different countries."

The time in the province has shown some of the Kansans a different view of the world they live in.

"The media would have us to believe that we are hated by most people in the world, but the truth is we are liked and respected by many people of the world," said 1st Sgt. Timothy Tiemissen, Company B, First Sergeant, Task Force Tornado. "I have learned a lot from the people in Kosovo, which my Soldiers appreciate and the job we do is beneficial and welcome by most people."

The residents in the area of responsibility for Task Force Tornado saw 5,000 patrols, 153 vehicle checkpoints, 19 cordon and searches and 62 multinational joint and border patrols conducted by the Soldiers, according to Command Sgt. Major Joe Romans, Task Force Tornado.

"The challenge of working with multinational forces at the maneuver level is extremely rewarding when the people of Kosovo greet you on the streets of towns that are out of sector and thank you for the work you are doing," said 1st Sgt. Terry Medley, Company A, Task Force Tornado.

The success of each mission didn't come from statistics the battalion obtained, but something much greater than numbers.

"Statistics don't really tell the human part of the story of our year in Kosovo," said Romans. "The true measure of success isn't in statistics."

"I think the measure of Tornado's success is its Soldiers,"

he said. "It's in the accomplishment of something more intangible than numbers: Violence that did not occur, Kosovo lives and property that were not destroyed, houses and churches that were not burned, crimes that weren't committed, smuggling that never took place and riots that did not erupt."

The peacekeepers of Task Force Tornado were successful in many of the missions given to them during the year.

"Our success and significant impact during our time here has been the relationships we have developed," said Capt. Robert Stinson, executive officer, Company C. "Those relationships enabled Soldiers to discover numerous IED's, weapons and helped stabilize tense situations in our area of responsibility. The willingness of the Soldiers to watch out for each other and work as a team proved to be a huge success."

"There were no significant injuries or negligent Soldier issues that caused them to lose focus on the mission and safety," he said. "The leaders of Charlie Company were exceptional in their ability to plan and execute all of the missions assigned and still maintain extremely high morale throughout the company."

Like a brief summer storm through the plains of Kansas, the troops will pass through the province, but the effects of the storm will never be forgotten.

"There is a chance for peace and freedom here," said Romans. "A chance at a better life. Children that are growing up without the horror of war and conflict. That is the true measure of our accomplishment."

"I marvel at what manner of Soldiers we have, and their willingness to give so much and risk so much," he said.

The Tornado troops traveled halfway around the world, and left everything they cherish behind them to accomplish the mission given to them.

"They do this because at the core of every American Soldier lies duty, honor, and country," said Romans.

"To bring peace and freedom to a place that hasn't known it," he said.

"They do their duty without parades and fanfare and expectation of reward. They've done their duty here because they are United States Soldiers, and that's what is expected of them," said Romans.



Top left photo, Task Force Tornado Soldiers regroup after early morning crowd riot control training at Camp Bondsteel. Above photo, Spc. Loren Stinebaugh takes a break after a crowd riot control exercise near Film City. Below right, Green smoke sets the backdrop for crowd riot control training held on Camp Bondsteel. Bottom right, Staff Sgt. Jason Eaves, Company B takes a moment for a photograph with Gen. B.B. Bell and his son's Fraggie Rock doll. Bottom left, A patrol from Company C stops and talks to a man on a tractor during a sunny day.





Top photo, Soldiers from Company C, Task Force Tornado perform a patrol through the town of Letnice/Letnica. Right photo, Spc. Mike Banicky and Sgt. Shawn Lehotta both members of Company A prepare their flying objects before a crowd riot control training exercise. Above photo, Staff Sgt. Timothy Hoesli and other members of Task Force Tornado bring supplies to a local school.





Top photo, Soldiers are on guard as a rioter falls to the ground during a crowd riot control exercise on Camp Bondsteel. Bottom right photo, A HMWWV hangs to the rear during a crowd riot control exercise. Above photo, A Soldier checks under the hood of a vehicle during a vehicle check point operation.



Staff Sgt. Andrew Boutell, (left) and Spc. Fernando Pinales (right) both of Task Force Falcon, work the battle desk during their shift.

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. R. David Kyle

MEDEVAC! Bomb threat! Land mine! These words have the power to set Soldiers in motion and orders are issued when the call reaches the Multinational Brigade (East) Battle Desk.

"The battle desk is a portion of the tactical operations center (TOC) manned by operations (S3) personnel and intelligence (S2) personnel," said Maj. Dirk A. Levy, the deputy chief of operations for MNB (East). "All information is passed through the battle desk and this enables a central point for information to enter the TOC, be captured, documented and passed to whoever needs it quickly."

The brigade TOC at Camp Bondsteel serves as the command and control hub to assist the commander in synchronizing operations and to monitor key events throughout MNB (East) 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Soldiers who work at the battle desk are responsible for synchronizing and de-conflicting brigade operations, maintaining a journal of all significant activities within the MNB (East) area-of-responsibility (AOR), sending and receiving messages and reports, and maintaining a current and accurate operational picture to include unit

locations and activities.

"Their job is critical in ensuring the brigade commander has a accurate situational awareness at all times," said Maj. John M. Andrews, chief of operations for MNB (East). "The Soldiers at the battle desk work long, thankless hours in order to meet the 24/7 manning requirement."

The battle desk is manned by one officer (battle captain), one noncommissioned officer (battle NCO), and two junior enlisted Soldiers (radio/telephone operator and journal clerk). By the nature of their job, they are usually among the first to know of key events and activities occurring within the AOR.

"Staying ahead of things is not as simple as one may think," said Capt. Guerllamo M. Jimenez, battle captain for Task Force Falcon. "The challenge is to maintain situational awareness in order to facilitate operations by ensuring that all parties are informed of events while the information is still useful."

Jimenez, a native of Modesto, Calif. and a roadway supervisor, explains that there are no typical days at the battle desk.

"Every day is different; some-

times we go for a day or two without anything happening in the field that requires our direct involvement, but there are several days in which we need to move injured Soldiers by MEDEVAC, react to vehicle accidents and people requesting medical care at the gate," he said. "In addition to that, there are cross boundary operations, or cordon and search missions in sector."

"Typical days vary depending on the OPTEMPO (operational tempo) of the brigade," said Sgt. 1st Class David L. Felando, a battle NCO for Task Force Falcon. "It can range from slow and boring, to overwhelmingly hectic and exciting."

Regardless of what kind of day the guardsmen working the battle desk experience, units know who to call when the need arises.

"We are responsible to send assistance to the Soldier out on patrol with effective and timely support," said Capt. William F.M. Foss, battle captain for Task Force Falcon. "We are the lifeguards when they need help or an immediate decision."

Whatever call may come, the officers and enlisted Soldiers manning the battle desk are ready to receive, respond and record.



One first grader, Argentin, (right) at Skenderbeu School in Ukmajl, smiles at her classmate, who is too shy to have her photograph taken.

A Classroom Connection

Story and photo by Spc. Alicia Dill

Seven hundred fifty dollars or 600 Euros, a fair amount of money by today's standards, but what is it worth? A monthly house payment for some, or perhaps a used car or computer?

For the Skenderbeu School, in the village of Ukmajl, Kosovo, 600 Euros is their yearly budget allotted by the municipality. This amount may seem small to some, but for the 120 students attending, this is their educational future.

"The school in Ferizaj/Urosevac has 4,000 kids and we can't ask for the same things or the same amount of money with a school this size," said Muhamet Murati, principal at the Skenderbeu School. "Now there is a need for another school to be built in Ferizaj/Urosevac, and the funding, if there is anything out there, is going to build this other school."

Aware of the scarcity of funding in the province's schools, Kosovo Forces Soldiers and their families decided to do something to help out. Recently, eight soldiers from the Headquarters and Headquarters Operations Company, 628th Military Intelligence (MI) Battalion, 28th Infantry Division from Harrisburg, Pa. visited the school and met with the children of this mountainside village.

"We knew that it was a small school and very poor," said Capt. Kevin Romine, company commander, 628th MI. "I also have teams that work in the area and they were familiar with the needs of the school."

With donations from churches, families and the Mountain View Elementary School in Harrisburg, Pa. the troops had more to give than a friendly visit. The Soldiers brought winter clothing, boots and school supplies to help combat cold winter temperatures in the Balkan region, said Staff Sgt. Herb Morrow, Noncommissioned Officer in Charge, Tactical HUMINT Operations, 628th MI.

The Pennsylvania Guardsmen's daily mission usually consists of collecting human intelligence information, but the school visit is another opportunity to check the pulse of the people.

"From the day-to-day grind of being tasked with missions,

it was nice to go out and be able to benefit the children so they can see us in a different light," said Romine, a York, Pa. native. "Instead of just seeing KFOR vehicles drive down the road, they realize we are caring and compassionate."

Donating to the school was a positive experience for students in both Kosovo and Pennsylvania. For the students who donated from Mountain View Elementary School in Harrisburg, Pa., it was a way to connect to their global peers.

"Our goal at the elementary level is to develop a sense of citizenship and caring," said Jill McPherson, student council project advisor, Mountain View Elementary School in Harrisburg, Pa. "We have done projects at a local level but this was an opportunity for the students to connect in a global way. With a direct connection to one of the Soldiers in Kosovo, the kids could put names with faces and even our kindergartners can feel like they are helping other people"

"If nothing more, we are showing the children of Kosovo that we care about their future," said Morrow. "I think it is important as well for our children back home to see us doing these things because it gives them a feeling that they are helping."

Besides the basic pens, pencils and paper, Murati sees a need for supplies that would enhance the science subjects and add a more challenging curriculum.

"We wish we had a chemistry lab or somewhere they could do practical labs, rather than just learning out of textbooks," he said. "We need the resources to have more specialized subjects to teach at the school here."

However, he does not take for granted the donations of time and supplies that different organizations have contributed.

"These things are big and they have to come with time," he said. "We don't like asking for things because you always give us so much."

The MI Soldiers plan on returning to Ukmajl before their upcoming end of mission and are still collecting donations from family and friends in Harrisburg, Pa.

Parting Shots

PHOTO BY SPC. ALICIA DILL

